AMERICAN

MEDICAL BOTANY.

GILLENIA TRIFOLIATA.

Common Gillenia.

PLATE XLI.

NOTWITHSTANDING the principle avowed by Linnæus, that genera are formed by nature; the determination of generic consanguinity in species occasions in many instances one of the greatest perplexities of the botanist. What difference in structure and external form either of flower or fruit, is sufficient to separate families of plants from each other; is a point often difficult to decide; and is perhaps as frequently set at rest by convenience and by arbitrary decision, as it is by any unexceptionable boundaries designated in nature. When the species of a vegetable order are exceedingly numerous, and a close similarity pervades the whole; genera are multiplied by botanists, that the discrimination of species may be facilitat-

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